



For Immediate Release
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News Release

Utah Child Safety Program Goes Nationwide *"Spot the Tot" Campaign Adopted by National Safe Kids Coalition*

(Salt Lake City) – When the Utah Department of Health (UDOH), Safe Kids Utah and Primary Children's Medical Center (PCMC) joined forces to save children's lives last year, they didn't know the rest of the country would take notice. But the Spot the Tot driveway rollover death prevention campaign caught the attention of Safe Kids USA, and this month, the organization is launching the program in 10 cities across the country. The kickoff took place Sept. 13 in Washington, D.C., headquarters for Safe Kids USA, and comes back home to Salt Lake City for a re-launch September. 28. With the deaths of two more Utah children in rollovers just this month, the event is timely.

"This danger touches every community across the country," said Torine Creppy, director of child passenger safety for Safe Kids Worldwide. "We are thrilled to bring Safe Kids Utah's innovative program to those communities and are confident it will save lives," she added. "Since the coalition was formed in 1995, Safe Kids Utah has been a leader in child safety initiatives and is an example to hundreds of other local coalitions in this country."

"We developed Spot the Tot because of the growing number of Utah children who were being hurt and killed in driveways and parking lots," said Safe Kids Utah coordinator Sharon Hines-Stringer. "We have so many families with large vehicles and young children—a dangerous mix—that we saw an urgent need help them remember to check around their cars before getting behind the wheel," she said.

From 1997-2005, 36 Utah children under age 10 were killed and more than 570 were injured in vehicle rollovers. Most of the vehicles were trucks, vans and SUVs, and most were driven by a relative of the victim. Of the deaths, 26 (72%) occurred from 2002-2005.

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The re-launch will take place at 11:00 a.m. at the UDOH onsite childcare center, First Steps. Parents and children who attend the center will visit education stations where they can learn about all aspects of vehicle safety. Safe Kids Utah will also conduct a dramatic visual demonstration showing how hard it is to see small children behind big vehicles.

“Spot the Tot” focuses on drivers but we also need to teach children how to behave around cars,” said PCMC child advocacy manager Janet Brooks. “For example, kids shouldn’t play in driveways or in or around parked vehicles.”

Safe Kids Utah offers these easy tips to keep children safer:

- Caregivers should firmly hold the hands of children when near vehicles.
- Drivers should always be on the lookout for children, even if they don’t have children of their own. That means adults in parking lots and driveways where children could be playing nearby should do a safety check.
- Drivers should walk all the way around a parked vehicle to check for kids, toys and pets before entering the car and starting the motor.

“We’re all in a hurry today, but taking just five seconds to walk around your car before getting in to drive could save a life,” said Hines-Stringer. “And it could be the life of your own child or grandchild.”

For more information, contact Cyndi Bemis at 801-538-6348 or 801-550-4228. For more information on child safety, please visit the UDOH Safe Kids Utah Web site at <http://health.utah.gov/vipp>.

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